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The Honorable Tom Lantos
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Tom Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen:



CONGRESSWOMAN JANE HARMAN
36TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

October 3, 2007

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS
AND THE INTERNET

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ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY

NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

I write to urge you to reconsider your decision to mark-up H. Res. 106, the Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

My father was a refugee to the United States from Nazi Germany. I understand the consequences of ethnic and racial persecution, and am committed to fighting and condemning acts of genocide wherever they occur. That is why I agreed to cosponsor H. Res. 106. I am convinced that a terrible crime was committed against the Armenian people. That crime should be recognized and condemned.

However, following a visit to Turkey earlier this year that included meetings with Prime Minister Erdogan, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch and colleagues of murdered journalist Hrant Dink, I have great concern that this is the wrong time for the Congress to consider this measure.

Due to my security focus in the House, I have made 18 trips to the Middle East region over the past 14 years and am persuaded that Turkey plays a critically important role in moderating extremist forces there. Given the nature of the threat, I believe it is imperative to nurture that role – however valid from the historical perspective, we should avoid taking steps that would embarrass or isolate the Turkish leadership.

Modern Turkey is a moderate Islamist state that recently elected a new government and Parliament, and has begun to reevaluate many of its policies and practices. Indeed, just yesterday, the new Turkish Foreign Minister met with his Armenian counterpart to discuss, among other things, normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia.

I understand and sympathize with the sentiments expressed by H. Res. 106. However, in my view, passage of the resolution at this time would be destabilizing not only to Armenian-Turkish relations but also to our efforts to create stability in the greater Middle East. I urge you to delay the markup and I continue to hope that no vote will occur. But should it occur, I will oppose the resolution.

Regards,

JANE HARMAN

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